



Michele Reynolds

**Ohio Senate 3rd District
Sponsor Testimony on SB 35**

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 35.

Senate Bill 35 establishes supported decision-making as a less restrictive alternative to guardianship for adults with developmental disabilities in Ohio. This creates a structured pathway for individuals to retain decision-making authority while receiving support from trusted advisors. The bill ensures adults with developmental disabilities can make, communicate, and implement their own life decisions with support, not substitution.

The substitute bill strengthens clarity and safeguards. It focuses exclusively on formal, written supported decision-making plans. By requiring plans to be documented, signed voluntarily, and properly witnessed, it provides clarity to families, courts, and third parties. This strengthens the usability of supported decision-making across legal, medical, and financial settings.

The bill makes clear that no individual is required to enter into a plan to receive help. Ohioans may continue to rely on natural supports without formal documentation. This creates an additional option when a more structured approach is beneficial.

The bill also strengthens supporter accountability. Plans must be entered into with informed consent. Supporters are required to act as fiduciaries, avoid conflicts of interest, and disclose any conflicts that arise.

The individual remains in control. Entering into a plan is not evidence of incapacity, and individuals may act independently, modify, or terminate the plan at any time. This keeps supported decision-making flexible and empowering, not restrictive.

The Department of Developmental Disabilities will develop a model plan and educational materials to help individuals, families, and professionals understand how to use supported decision-making.

Senate Bill 35 provides a balanced framework. It protects rights, adds safeguards, and expands options beyond guardianship without mandates or limiting existing supports.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.